

THE FAIRY DRAMA.



by

Edward D. Kroesch.

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Approved: E. F. Engel
Dept. of German.

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Introduction.

Literature, whatever its form, tends to reflect the life of the people. The form changes with the changing moods of thought and life, and this readily lends itself to extremes. So we have in the modern German drama, a line of development which resulted in the well characterized forms of Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism and Neo-romanticism. The German drama was given its independence from other influencing literatures, by Lessing, who held Shakespeare as the great model for all dramatic form. In spite of this, however, we see German originality asserting itself, in the disregard for rules and its expression of the life and feeling of its own people, rather than the use of a set form of verse in which to develop some exotic subject. Thus we have the works of the Storm and Stress movement, to which Goethe and Schiller belonged in their early activity, and which had for its purpose, the freedom of the individual from restraint as represented by the Greek ideal.

Exhaustion naturally follows unlimited freedom, and so it was with this school. In a very short time the drama was used to serve the lowest impulses and to arouse cheap emotions by the portrayal of unhealthy, pitiable conditions. Schiller and Goethe, however, did not share in this decline. Instead they sought a pure form to combat this

literary anarchy, and they found that in the union of German ideals with Greek form, which means that proportion, harmony, clearness and grandeur of thought, and intrinsic truth should be expressed in rythmical, elevated language. There is a tendency toward realism in both writers, especially in Goethe, and their inherent demand for moral freedom caused them to fail in the complete fulfilment of their ideal; yet they left for later writers, a model which was followed only too closely.

Alongwith this stronger, more consistently developed movement, there is in the first half of the nineteenth century, what is known as the Romantic school, a group of theorizers rather than consistent writers; whose only law of life and art is caprice, which acknowledges no power above itself. There is, therefore, no distinction between the natural and the supernatural, the real and the imaginary, in their works. The world of fairies, of dwarfs, of plant and animal life join with man in carrying on the work of this earth, and mingle with him in his cares, joys, ambitions and failures with the same feelings and emotions that dominate the human life. One particular characteristic of this school must be noted: the accuracy with which every shade of thought and feeling is brought to clearest expression, and especially the love for nature. The Romanticists were not independent, however, for they continually borrowed

from Classicism, Their style of verse and language were imitated directly, but naturally with much less effect, for they lacked the judgment and the ideal mind of the men whom they were seeking to imitate.

Up to the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, art treated subjects that lay largely, not in the world of reality but in the past, the Middle Ages or the world of Antiquity. True it is that the tendency was in the direction of the real, but with all it remained largely idealistic. It was not till political and social conditions in Germany called to mind problems that were vital to the lives of the people, that men began to make use of these materials in their literature. Things that had been almost completely ignored in former days, such as, the home life of the people, the dialectic differences, and man's relation to the society in which he lives, especially in the smaller, detailed way, were now taken up as the themes for dramas and other forms of literature. The growth of the sciences, psychology, geology, biology, etc., helped to call attention to the physical world in which men were living and acting, and pointed out that spirit and matter are indissoluble; the former being no longer sovereign of the latter, but even conditioned by it in its existence. The old idealism was losing its hold, the universe was coming to be looked at from a very materialistic point of view. Events were no longer given an heroic interpretation,

but were regarded as a necessary result of industrial and psychical movements which were ruled by inviolable, natural laws.

In this new conception of art, old laws and standards could naturally be followed no longer, and were consequently rejected, but were not replaced by new universally accepted values. As the result, art sought first to reproduce only external phenomena as exactly as possible, and especially those things which had formerly been extremely distasteful and insignificant for its purpose: the commonplace and the diseased in society. The following characteristics of this extreme realism, technically called Naturalism, may be noted:

- # (1) Exact reproduction of the social structure, with emphasis upon minute detail.
- (2) Affiliation with materialism and pessimism.
- (3) Conception of society, as based upon a competitive struggle, making life harsh for many.
- (4) The factors of heredity and environment in determining human fate.
- (5) Woman's biologic equality with man, dethroning her as a romantic ideal.

As regards the form of the individual plays, we find that their construction is very loose. The value

Chandler - Aspects of Modern Drama.

of the plot and it's main elements are minimized, the movement is slow and not developed so as to conform to the old standard of rising and falling action, with the climax and catastrophe coming at certain definite periods. The long used " asides " and monologues have been discarded. The dialogue is terse, very broken and rambling and usually spoken in the dialect of the community in which the action is supposed to take place. Simple, rude language, filled with commonplace expressions is used to reveal depths of thought and feeling, and it's power is not lessened by the psychological use of suggestion. Every act, however insignificant, must be psychologically motivated, allowing no room for the play of romantic feelings. The stage setting is very detailed and must present a photographic picture of natural surroundings, as nearly as that is possible, and not only the setting, but also the properties of the characters must be exact, from the age and color of the eyes, to their physical deformities.

Origin and associations.

The naturalist, then, sees things as they actually are, and tries to reproduce them truthfully and accurately, as nearly as he has the power to do so. Truth is his watchword. How well he succeeds in his purpose is doubtful. From a psychological point of view, he can portray nature, not as it really is, but as he sees it; and since the same scene taken from life cannot mean the same to any two persons, we must come to the conclusion, that the Naturalist not only tries to reproduce nature, but in so doing adds his own impression and the "Stimmung" in which it places him. All of this is present in the picture which he seeks to portray. We have, then, the objectivity of nature, plus the subjectivity of the poet, the former, however, dependent upon the latter: the "Stimmung". This objectivity gradually approaches subjectivity, and when carried to extremes, as in the portrayal of human hopes, ambitions, or dreams of ideal conditions, which are a real part of actual life, is almost identical with it.

No one will question the fact that these things really exist and are a part of life, but to treat them as we do other facts, is impossible, because they are not stable; they are changing continually. Because they are not subject to the laws of life and existence as other realities are, they can best be portrayed in forms which represent their thought, but are themselves not under these restric-

tions, as: the supernatural; fairies, etc. These may take the form of the poet's own thoughts or his interpretation of the thoughts of other individuals or groups of individuals. Thus Rautendelein, the wood nymph, represents for Heinrich, the ideal of a new life, of new conditions. Indeed, he mistakes it for a better life, which it is not, but it is the object of his striving, and when he thinks he has attained to it, he vainly seeks to cling to it. So with Pippa. The Director, sees her as a vague, airy dream, somewhere in the future. He wants to possess her. But he sees also, how not only he, as the representative of the middle class of society, has this ideal in mind. The lower class also, has this same ideal in view, although to them it is still more vague and evasive. And again, he sees how the poet-dreamer, who already possesses her without any effort whatever, does not even appreciate her as an ideal.

Lorenz[#] explains the appearance of the romantic and supernatural in modern literary movements, as a reaction against the oppressive reality of things. He says:

" Der Naturalist fuehlt sich den Dingen unterthan. Er leidet unter seinen Eindruecken. Leiden⁶⁶zeugt Sehnsucht nach einem freieren Zustande, Er will eine Welt erlangen die weicher und wonniger ist, wo das Harte, das Unleidbare vermieden werden kann. Das Maerchen und Phantasie-

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Lorenz - Die Litteratur am Jahrhundert-Ende.

stueck ist das kuenstlerische Befreiungsmittel des Dicht-
er's, weil der Mensch sich selber nicht kennt, sondern
Bilder seines eignen Wesens nach seinen eignen Wuenschen
macht."

If this movement were only a reaction upon a previous
" too real " literature, we would find difficulty in ex-
plaining some phenomena, such as, the occurrence of both
elements in the same author and even in the same drama.
Hauptmann is an example of this, in his " Die versunkene
Glocke " and "Und Pippa tanzt". It is all the more strange
since the two views seem to be diametrically opposed to
each other.

If, however, the author conceived the fairy or super-
natural element as an outgrowth, rather than a direct re-
sult of Naturalism; in other words, a method of presenting
the thought life of man rather than simply the physical
life, the problem becomes less complex. Then Heinrich or
the Director, whether they represent the author or a cer-
tain class of society, may live in the world of the ideal,
move and act without restraint, and yet be actual human
beings in an actual universe, governed by the laws of
nature as other humans are. This applies, not only to
Hauptmann, but also to Sudermann in his "Drei Reiherfedern,"
altho not to such a great extent, for here the supernatur-
al is portrayed, not in fanciful beings, but in a hidden
power, which is embodied in the three heron feathers.

This power rests entirely in the hands of the man who knows it's force and can loose it, but the result of it's action he cannot change. In this case, the intense desire which gives rise to the action of the drama, is an irresistible longing on the part of the hero, for the one woman, who in every way shall meet his desires.

For want of a better name, we may call the three dramas of this type Symbolistic-Fairy dramas; plays in which the fairy element is present, but only as a symbol of the thought life of the hero. (We must note here, that this is by no means the only way in which symbolism may be used in drama. Ibsen and Maeterlink use it without supernatural interpretation, in fact their characters are very true to reality.

Then too, there is the fairy drama which has no trace of symbolism in it, neither do the characters act contrary to the laws of nature in any way whatsoever; but the plot, if not altogether impossible, is at least highly improbable. The material is taken from old fairy tales, worked over, and made appropriate for usage in a modern drama, and in the case of the two which we will consider, given a distinct Germanic spirit. These two are: " Der Talisman " by Ludwig Fulda, and " Koenigskinder " by Ernst Rosmer. Both dramatize old fairy tales, taken from the Orient or from Germany itself, and idealize them to some extent, and give them nobler motivation. Yet in essence they are the same,

#Elsa Bernstein.

and teach the same lesson which the original was intended to teach. Their romantic plots are treated in a very realistic way, in action, speech and psychological motivation, and their only purpose seems to be, to entertain. According to our definition of Naturalism we can hardly include this type of drama under that head, altho it has many of the characteristics, especially in the use of common expressions in the language, and it's emphasis upon detail in stage properties and the appearance of the figures. But instead of the dark, gloomy, pessimistic air found in so many naturalistic works, we have in these, a light, fairy-like touch, full of optimism and cheer. It seems to be an attempt, on the part of the authors, to unite Realism and Romanticism, but the result so far, has been nothing great and lasting. It has rather a secondary value, which lies chiefly in the fact that it's beauty of form and content is pleasing to the eye and ear. There is no great world view (Weltanschauung) back of it.

The fairy drama is, then, a part of what is nominally called, the Neo-romantic movement, and we may classify it in two distinct types:

- (1) The Symbolistic Fairy drama, which is a direct outgrowth of the naturalistic movement hence a part of it
- (2) The Realistic Fairy drama, in which an attempt is made to unite the beauty of romanticism with the reality of naturalism.

Individual Dramas.

In dealing individually with the five plays representing the two divisions of the Fairy drama, we may best treat them under the three heads:

- (1) Plot.
- (2) World view (Weltanschauung).
- (3) Form.

We have already said that the Realistic Fairy drama has no great view of life back of it; that the author was concerned only with the thought of pleasing his hearers. So in the discussion of this group we may take the plot and form alone, into consideration.

Der Talisman.

Ludwig Fulda.

The plot of this play, unites two Oriental fairy-tales, that of the rascals who purpose to weave a golden cloak for the egotistic king, which shall be invisible because of it's delicacy, and after receiving large piles of gold with which to weave the cloak, place an imaginary robe about the king, allow him to show himself to his subjects, and themselves abscond with the money; and that of the poor man and the prince, who by the will of fate exchange places, the beggar becoming the prince and the prince taking the beggar's place, and the dissatisfaction of each in his unnatural surroundings, especially of the beggar in the prince's palace.

In the drama the two plots are, of course, ennobled. Christian morals and purposes dominate them, instead of the old ideals of avarice and ambition. The latter plot is made subordinate to the former, but it is no less vital in bringing about the desired action.

The despotis Astolf, king of Cyprus, in his own eyes all-knowing and all-powerful, still feels that he lacks an indefinable Something, which he cannot explain nor account for. Omar, a traveller from the Orient, promises to supply this want with his magic talisman, whose power he will transmit to an artistic cloak which the king is to wear at the annual festival, before the inhabitants of his land who come to do homage to their sovereign at that time. This cloak, however, is to be invisible to all wicked and ignorant people, and this demonstration will, therefore, give the king knowledge of the loyalty as well as the morality of his subjects.

On the morning before the promise has been made, the lustful king had sought to gain Maddelena, the daughter of Diomed one of the leading nobility, for his pleasure. She really loved him, but would not disgrace herself even to do his will. The king, enraged at finding his purpose thwarted, sentenced her with her father, who upheld her honor, to exchange places with the old basket-weaver Habakuk and his daughter Rita, and to live in the little old hut just in sight of the palace, while the two poor people were commanded to occupy the nobleman's place at court.

Astolf finds it unsatisfactory to have the object of his pleasure gone, but admits no guilt on his part. He waits for the completion of the magic cloak which shall tell him the true state of affairs in his kingdom, and also that which he lacks of being a perfect man. At last it is ready to be examined. His statesmen come to look upon the wonderful work which the artist himself paints with such glowing colors. They see nothing, but for fear that they will be counted among the ignorant or wicked, they falsely pretend to see it, report it's beauty to the king and spread the news throughout the land. When the king himself comes, he sees the illusion by which his men have been deceived, and in that very act realizes that he has not been all-knowing, for he had always believed in the truthfulness of his subjects. Instead of admitting his fallibility, however, he decides to go on with the illusion, and by making the people believe in the invisible cloak, show his authority still more.

Meanwhile, the king's most trusted general, Berengar, in league with the outcast Diomed, plots to overthrow the throne, unknown to the king. Maddelena, out of love for her king, tries to prevent this action on the part of her father, but with seeming ill success.

The day of the festival appears. The king comes forth clad in his magic robe, pompous and dignified to all of the people until they are disillusioned by the single remark of the innocent basket-weaver's daughter Rita, "Er hat ja

gar nichts an ", and then they too see that he is dressed in a suit of underwear only. The king rages at the scorn and ridicule of which he is the object, and demands that the guilty one confess and retract the statement. Rita comes forward, but will tell no falsehood, for she sees no cloak. Altho he knows that she is speaking the truth he orders her to be cast into prison until she shall retract. At the same time, Omar steps out and confesses his guilt in the matter, and that he made no cloak in the first place. He too is cast into prison.

The pride of the monarch is slowly crumbling, but he still rests upon his absolute authority. Not until the next day, when he hears of the faithlessness of the trusted Berengar, the undying love of Maddelena, who saves his life and throne, the innocent trustworthiness of Rita and the great heart of Omar, does he acknowledge himself defeated. Omar was right. "Der Mut der Wahrheit" was the magic Talisman.

The fairy or "Maerchen" element in this drama lies largely in the easy, naive way of treating the improbable. The ridiculous picture of the king standing before his people without his robe on is a difficult situation to handle, but it is made perfectly plausible here. The unnatural position in which Habakuk finds himself, after he has been made a nobleman, adds humor to the play as a whole. For instance:

King. Dein Name?

Hab. Gewaltigster - - ich heiss - - ich heiss - -
 ich heiss - - Verzeih, wenn ich vor lauter Furcht
 nicht weiss wie ich heisse.

or again, in a naturalistic strain:

Hab. (sniffs in air)

Hm, merkst du nichts ?

- - - - -
 Hab. Die Luft erfuellen liebevolle Gerueche:
 Mich kitzelt meine Nase Sehnsuchtsvoll.
 Es duftet wie nach feiner kalter Kueche.

Both beauty and force are displayed. Beauty in the
 form of verse and in the language. It is irregular rhymed
 verse, entirely. The rhyme scheme is varied: abba, abab,
 abc acb, etc., and is as free as the meter is. The lan-
 guage reminds one at times of that of the old romantic
 school, as when the king speaks to Maddelena:

Nur du vermagst mich wiederum zu kroenen,
 Nur du mit meiner Pflicht mich zu versoehnen.
 O sprich das Wort, das einzig mir verleiht,
 Wonach ich irrend suchte; hab Erbarmen
 Mit meiner tiefen Einsamkeit;
 Erloese mich aus winterlichem Bann:
 Lass dies erstarrte Herz erwaermen,
 Damit es anderen Waerme spenden kann.
 Willst du ?

and again, when speaking to Habakuk about Rita:

Ich bin zu arm sie zu beschenken,

Und doch unendlich reicher als ich war.

Not only is the language beautiful, but it is also forceful and dramatic, as in the scene where Diomed rescues his daughter from the hands of the king:

Mad. Mein Vater, schuetze mich.

Diom. So ist es wahr,

Das grause Schreckbild, das mir die Gefahr

Seit Monden vorrueckt - - -

King. Schweig, bei deinem Haupte.

Diom. Frei dien ich dir, und frei ist mein Geschlecht.

King. Ich bin der Koenig, und du bist mein Knecht.

- - - - -

K. Wer will dem Koenig sagen was er darf ?

D. Wer sich in freier Wahl ihm unterwarf.

E. Bin ich der Herrscher nicht in meinem Reich ?

D. Du bist es; doch wir sind vor Gott dir gleich.

The dialogue is not slow, altho there is an abundance of long speeches which retard the action to some extent. One surprising feature of the play, considering the period in which it was written and the nature of the subject-matter, is the fact that the plot is developed regularly and consecutively. We have the introduction (Stimmungsakkord) in the first scene; The rising action, in the results of the king's foolhardy desires and in Omar's boasted prophecies. The climax comes in Act 2, scene 2, with the king's decision to go on with the illusion of the invisible

cloak, in spite of his better judgment. An anti-climax appears in Act 3, scene 7, when the people come to the festival and the king fails to convince them of the reality of his magic robe. The falling action is portrayed in the gradual loss of his bigotry and selfishness, and by the recognition of his wrong.

The characters are all real, the action is psychologically motivated and natural laws are obeyed. The play as a whole, has a bright sunny tone, due largely to it's romantic setting: the island of Cyprus, in the southern seas. It tends to lift the reader's spirits out of the oppressive present, into an atmosphere of the imaginary, rather than of the real.

Koenigskinder.

Ernst Rosmer.
(Elsa Bernstein)

Here we have a fairy drama embodying Germanic material placed in a purely Germanic background. The action centers around the Goose-girl and the King's son, whose romantic lives and surroundings make them seem unreal, even tho they always act in accord with psychological and natural laws.

The Goose-girl lives in an unfrequented forest, with her foster-mother, a witch. She has never seen a human face aside from that of the witch, until the King's son appears one day while she is watching her geese. He has left home to mingle with the common people of the kingdom and to learn to know them, and accidentally reaches this forest.

At the feet of the maid, he tells of his experiences in the world of which she knows so little, while she lays bare her innocent purity of soul with childish frankness. Within a very short time, love is awakened in them and they decide to leave the forest, with it's lonely life, together. But at the edge of the forest the Goose-girl wavers. She is afraid. Something seems to hold her rooted to the spot. She cannot leave; not even with him. In a rage at her faint-heartedness, the Prince departs, leaving only the golden crown by which he had proved his identity.

At the same time, a group of citizens, led by the Spielmann, had been sent to consult the witch as to who should be the next king, the Prince having dissappeared mysteriously and consequently left the state without a ruler. She tells them that on the following day, when the clock shall strike twelve, the gates are to be opened, and the first one entering the city, either man or woman, shall be their ruler.

The King's son, having spent the night in this city as a homeless vagabond, hears of this message and anticipates the pleasure he will have in declaring himself the true heir to the throne. The gates are thrown open at twelve but no king or queen appears; only the Goose-girl, followed by her flock. The witch's power over^{her} had been broken by the knowledge that she is of royal blood, so she has started in search of her prince. He now meets her, whom he

had considered lost to him, as his queen, but instead of being hailed with joy as the rulers of the land, they are ridiculed and cast out of the city. Only the Spielmann and a little girl whom the Prince had befriended, remain true to them and believe in their royal descent; but even for that, the poor old fiddler is cast out and made to live outside the city in a small decayed hut.

After years of wandering, the Royal children find their way back to the forest near this same city from which they had been driven, tired and weak from lack of food. In his desperation the Prince sells his golden crown which the Goose-girl had brought with her, and buys a small piece of mouldy bread with it. It is their last resort. No one will give them shelter from the wintry snows; so deserted and alone, they sit down on the already whitening ground, divide the crust of bread unselfishly between them, and lying down arm in arm, with only the falling snow for a blanket, sleeping, they slip out of the world of being with the trustful words: " Der Tod kann nicht kommen - - - ich liebe dich ".

The Spielmann and the little girl have decided to start out to look for the Royal children, because they still believe in them. A dove, which watched their deaths and then placed one of it's own feathers upon the lips of the Goose-girl, shows them where to find them. They are found. And at last, when the funeral procession winds it's way up the hill, among the mourners may be seen those who had

once had a part in exiling, but now with bared heads, give their silent recognition of the Royal children.

The plot is very romantic, tho none of the actions are necessarily supernatural. Nevertheless, they savor of a world not entirely under human control, as: in the witch's forecast and it's fulfillment; the power which holds the Goose-girl when she wishes to go with the Prince; and most of all the actions of the dove as she touches the lips of the dead with her feather. To the modern mind, most of these phenomena can be explained on psychological principles, but they give a fairy-like tone to the whole play. Wolff # says of the form of this drama, that it is "Ein Versuch den Maerchenstil mit dem kuenstlerischen Realismus zu versoehen. In seinen Anklaengen an das Volkslied und in den selbststaendigen Szenen, ist es poetisch und stimmungsvoll aufgefangen". The naive, almost childish tone of the fairy-tale is preserved throughout the play, and the characters used in old German legends are continually referred to, but in a thoroughly modern tone.

We can feel the realism, yet it in no way injures the beauty of the whole; if anything, it increases it. The language of the common people is used in scenes which depict the lower classes in their rude environment and their uncultured ways, and one is made to think and feel with them. Especially is this true in the second act, where the

Prince appears at the inn as a poor traveler, and is ridiculed because of his daintiness, in his poverty.

The most striking effects are produced by contrasts: the delicacy of the Goose-girl with the crudeness of the witch; the culture of the Prince with the degeneracy of the people of the city; the tender feeling of the Royal children with the lack of appreciation of the common people; the quiet death scene with the dancing and singing of the children; the scorn and derision of the people with their final humility; and thruout the whole play, the contrast between the human world and the "would-be" supernatural.

The drama is written in irregular, rhymed verse, which in it's irregularity seems thoroughly naturalistic, but in it's rhyme, reminds one of the early romantic school, as was the case in "Der Talismann", also. An example of the verse form is as follows:

" Die Lande sind eng, der Himmel ist weiter.

Fort. Hinaus.

In der Margenhelle

Ohne Begleiter

Entflieht er dem schlafenden Koenigshaus."

The form fits the thought, and yet preserves it's beauty. And not only is rhyme used, but the old device of alliteration is to be found also, in a modified form:

" Er schlaeft in seidengesaeumten Betten ", or,

" Zinnende Burgen sollt ihr erbauen ".

The action is, on the whole, very slow and more or less undramatic. The scenes are pleasant reading, but show little power, and create^{no} dramatic suspense. The conflict of the good and virtuous against the powers of evil and ignorance ends in weak submission of the former, although its influence is recognized after the death of the defeated contestant. There is no particular strength of character portrayal. The individuals follow their impulses and as a result fail in their purposes. The Royal children are simply good and beautiful in character, the witch is wicked, the common people, with two exceptions are ignorant and therefore learn to know the truth only after it is too late. It is a passive drama. We miss the aggressive power of personality. Each individual is acted upon instead of himself acting.

Another defect is the uneven development of the plot. It is rather a series of episodes than a continued growth, as in "Der Talisman". This characteristic, allows room for forceful individual scenes, but is detrimental to the drama as a whole. One of the strongest of these scenes is that in which the citizens are gathered together awaiting the appearance of their king at the stroke of twelve. As the last chime dies away the gates open to admit -- not a king or queen, but the dirty, ragged goose-girl followed by her flock. It is a moment of suspense which has its reaction in the sense of the ridiculous as it appeals to the people. They believe they have been the

dupe of a false prophecy, and therefore hoot at the girl and most of all at the penniless, ill-clad Prince who comes forth with the proud declaration that he is the real king and the Goose-girl his queen.

Another very impressive scene is that of their death. What could be more beautiful than the repetition by the dying maid, of the words:

"Der Tod kann nicht kommen-- ich liebe dich", and the calm which follows their death? The dove places one of her own feathers upon the lips of the maiden, sealing as it were her last words and thoughts, and the funeral procession later gives its recognition when quietly and softly it sings "Koenigskinder, Koenigskinder".

Beside the element of improbability in the play, there is a decided fairy(Maerchen) atmosphere. We are immediately placed in a romantic wood where the characters are such as we have been used to associating with the fairy tale: the witch, the Goose-girl, and the Kings son. The seeming supernatural power of the witch, is made to seem more actual by the effect which it produces upon the characters within the play itself. There seems to be an attempt to give the play a lightness of touch, especially in the character of the Goose-girl, but with the exception of the first act it has failed to produce that effect. It is not so much heavy in style, as depressive, which is due largely to the inability of the individuals to assert

their independence.

Die versunkene Glocke.

Gerhart Hauptmann.

Probably the greatest of the Symbolistic Fairy dramas is this play of Hauptmanns. When discussing plays of this type, we must always keep clearly in mind the fact that the fairy element and the supernatural in general is simply a means of making the symbol clear, and of giving it effect. If this is true, it is simply a matter of the supernatural element being present, and not a question of degree or frequency of appearance.

This drama is the most representative example of it's type. Heinrich, a master bell founder, has finished a master-piece, which is to be taken to the mountain top and from it's lofty seat in the belfry of the little church, is to ring out it's message to all people, both to those in the valley and those on the mountain-side. The Waldschrat, a goat-like creature, has heard of this undertaking and not wishing to be disturbed by such useless noise, wrecks the wagon on which the bell is being transported, so that the work topples over into the deep abyss, and in so doing, injures the frantic Heinrich, who tries to save it.

After regaining consciousness, the founder drags himself to a little hut in the forest, before which he again falls down, exhausted to unconsciousness. When he awakes,

Rautendelein, an elf, is standing over him. Altho a supernatural being, she longs to become human, a condition which only a union with one of the human race, of the opposite sex, can bring about. Heinrich attracts her at once. Her grandmather, the witch Wittichen, however, instead of allowing her to attend to the bell founder's physical needs, orders her to bed. For fear that the companions of Heinrich will come and take him away with them, she draws a magic circle about the place where he is lying. When the schoolmaster, the preacher and the barber arrive to help him, they are kept from even touching him, by invisible hands, until the old witch comes out, looses the charm, and with scathing words allows them to carry the injured man home.

At home, nursed by his faithful wife Magda, Heinrich hovers between life and death until Rautendelein, in the guise of a peasant girl, kisses his eyes, and with magic charm, gives them the power to see a new world, in which she is the guiding light and the incentive to a new and seemingly higher activity. When he recovers he follows her to the mountains, to the world of the elves, the licentious Waltschrat and the croaking Nickelmännchen, beings with primitive impulses and desires. He is allured by the charm of their freedom and independence of spirit, but not least is he lured by his sensuous love for Rautendelein. He begins to work on a new bell which is to be second to none in quality. He scorns the advice of the preacher to

return to the hum-drum life of the vilage, Unceasingly he drives his six dwarfs and himself in their work on the bell. But however free he may be to work and to love, he is also at the mercy of the beings about him: the Waldschrat and the Nickelmann, who see in him their most dangerous rival for the love of Rautendelein. They torment him with dreams of his past life, his home and his wife, until he groans under the pang of his conscience. Only the little elf can calm his excited feelings, but when one day he sees the apparition of his two children approaching, clothed in rags, carrying a vase filled with the tears of their deserted mother, not even the caresses and entreaties of Rautendelein can hold him. He curses her and goes back to the vilage, only to find that Magda has taken her own life.

But having once tasted of the freedom which knows no restraint, Heinrich fails to find peace for his newly awakened conscience in the narrow, every-day life of his former home. He is drawn back irresistably to the mountains to his elfish companion, Rautendelein. He sees his workshop burning to the ground. He is broken in spirit; he feels that his end is near. He has nothing to live for except to see once more the being who had been the guiding star of his life.

She, however, when rejected by him, had become the bride of the Nicklemann, and gone to live with him in the well. Heinrich appeals to Wittichen. She gives him

three glasses of wine, one white, one red, and a third yellow. If he drinks the first he will deceive the strength that has now left him. The second will restore the spirit to do and to feel as before; but having drunk the two, he must also drink the third which brings death. He follows the instructions and drinks the first two. Rautendelein rises from the well, but does not recognize him. The third glass brings her to his side. One moment of rapture, in which the bliss of their loves is relived, one moment of ecstatic happiness, and then the expiring bell-founder breathes his last, just as the sun, the symbol of all that he has been striving for, begins to rise.

It is hardly necessary to say that the characters are symbolic of some phase of human thought life, if they were not the play would have very little significance. Critics, however, are not agreed as to what they symbolize. The play was written as a result of the failure of Hauptmann's historical drama, "Florian Geyer", and thus in all probability represents to a great extent the authors own hopes and ambitions which were blighted by this disastrous event in his life. If we were to analyze the symbolism here used it would be something like this: Heinrich represents Hauptmann himself; the bell that fell into the abyss, Florian Geyer, the unsuccessful historical play which on account of its too cumbersome realism could

not reach the heights for which it was intended and therefore failed, crushing at the same time the hopes of the author. Rautendelein symbolizes a new ideal that awakens ~~fr~~ him from his despair. She is, as it were, part human and part supernatural, attracted to both and thereby bridging the gulf between them. The discouraged author sees in her a new ideal, and so, following this guiding light he is lead to begin a new work, in a field away from the bonds and restraint of human society, in a place where he is free from all laws of nature, from human ties and morals.

This second work is "Die versunkene Glocke", which with the help of the six dwarfs: energy, impatience, indecision, self-criticism and self-discipline, he is trying to perfect. The author is tempted by religion and the despair which arises from thoughts of his former failure, to give up his work, and once even, renouncing his new ideal, goes back to the old paths. But he can not be satisfied there in the confines of narrow human limitations. He comes back to finish his work and to end his career if need be where once he saw a vision of what he believed were higher things. But in the rejection of his ideal he ~~loses~~ it, and not until he has borrowd wisdom from legend and folk-lore, symbolized by Wittichen, does he regain it. In the very moment when he feels conscience of its loss, he grasps it again and with this

ideal as a part of himself, he sees the dawn of a hopeful day for the activities of the poet within him, and the death of his old pessimistic self.

His point of view is obviously an optimistic one. He believes in the freedom of the artist from human laws, and preaches the full expression of self glorifying individuality. He seems to say that the ideals of the artist and his attachment to them will not be understood by the average individual until long after he has passed into other fields of activity, but he still cherished the hope that at some future time they will become a part of the people as a whole. Then art and nature will be one. But the true artist will always have new ideals which are above the comprehension of those even, who know him best.

The beauty of the play lies not only in its symbolism, but also in the romantic atmosphere into which it transports the reader, by means of its form of verse, its language, characters and background. # For the most part, it is written in iambic pentameter, but not to the exclusion of such forms as the trochee, and the rhymed couplet. Irregular verses are common, being especially used by the Waldschrat, Wittichen and once by Rautendelein. One instance of "Kinderreim" is to be noted in the speech of the Waldschrat to Wittichen:

(#) Baker Introduction and Notes to "Die versunkne Glocke"

"Grossmutter, gieb acht auf das Deine,
du kriegst noch Gaeste unt feine.

etc.

The dialogue is slow and long drawn out. Soliloquies and monologues are frequent, thus retarding the action of the entire play to a great extent. But, however true that may be, the beautiful and expressive language used, repays for the lack of action. # "Man sieht die Welt ^{er}ent mit Bergeh, Himmelsluft und Wanderwoelkchen. Es ist voller Geheimnisse, Zaubersprueche und Angst-und Trostgestalten". It is full of references to old Germanic mythology and makes use of many devices which are to be found in folk-lore and legend. Similarities have been pointed out between "Die versunkene Glocke" and "Midsummer Night's Dream", the witch scene in "Macbeth", the Hexenkueche of "Faust", Fouque's "Undine", Byron's "Manfred", and many other semi-romantic works, with the object of finding Hauptmann's sources for this plot. All of these productions make use of the old legends in some form or other, so it is only to be expected that he should use some of the same material and need therefore, not necessarily have borrowed it from these authors. Whatever may be the case, however, he was very successful in blending the many different themes into one whole, and not only that, for there is almost perfect harmony between the thought and the form thruout the entire drama.

Gaergel - Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit.

Three distinct dramatic effects of the play may be noted:

- (1) The Problem : the relation of Art to every day life.
- (2) The romantic background for his idea.
- (3) Theatrical effects:

Act 2 The conflict between the bell-founder and his wife.

Act 3 The conflict between the bell-founder and the preacher.

Act 4 The melodramatic effect of the children appearing with the vase filled with tears.

Here too we may add, what we found in "Koenigskinder", the effect of contrast: mountain heights with valley; spirit with human world; virtue with evil. Another dramatic effect is the use of the Silesian dialect by the old witch. It is probably done to give a primitive impression of her, because of the part which she symbolizes: legend and folklore. We note also, the fact that the simplest, most realistic scenes are the ones which work most effectively.

The popularity which this play has had since it's publication, speaks for it's value as a stage production, but the hidden symbolism makes it equally profitable as a play to be read and thought over.

Und Pippa tanzt.

Gerhart Hauptmann.

Written ten years after "Die versunkene Glocke", the symbolism in this drama is of the same type as that of the former, except that it is carried much farther, even to the extent of being lost to the grasp of the human intellect.

The director of the glass factory has been deeply impressed by Pippa, the daughter of an Italian glass technician. He has thot of her continually and even dreamed about her. One evening at the tavern, the rude, primitive barbarian Huhn, a former glass blower, tries to dance with Pippa, but she continually evades him, approaching him lightly and , when he has almost seized, eludes his grasp. Hellriegel, a young, dreamy apprentice enters, and whereas Huhn has seemed repugnant to her and the director, a person of no significance, she seems attracted to the young man immediately and goes to him.

In the course of the evening, Pippa's father is shot for cheating at cards, and in the confusion which arises Huhn escapes with Pippa. He takes her to his hut, treats her well, but cannot satisfy her. Hellriegel comes in search of her, but does not recognize her when he reaches the hut. She begs him to rescue her from the hands of Huhn, and after much persuasion, he consents to take her with him, whither he does not know.

Half frozen they come to the hut of Wann, a mythical being, whom the director has just come to visit, in order that he might obtain from him some cure for his love for Pippa. He loses it when his attention is called to her preference for Hellriegel. The latter had fallen in the snow, almost dead from the cold. He is carried into the house, and in the process of his recovery, dreams. Wann gives him a ship in which to sail around the world. He cannot make it start, however, until Pippa has spoken the magic word. The dreamer then sails on the wings of fantasy until Wann wakens him.

The tired Hellriegel is then shown to his room to rest from the exertions of the journey. While Wann is carrying Pippa to her bed, Huhn enters the room, and when the old man returns, engages him in a struggle of life and death. After a short, but violent contest, Huhn falls into Wann's arms, a broken man. Pippa suspecting what has happened, comes from her room, and soon after, Hellriegel too appears. Wann leaves the room for a short time, warning Pippa, under no circumstances, to dance. As soon as he is gone, however, Huhn requests as a last favor, that she dance for him. He seems to have a supernatural power over her. She tries to oppose it, cries to Hellriegel to help her, but he, not understanding, takes out his okarina and plays the familiar tune to which she is accustomed to dancing. Huhn has been given a glass of wine to quench his thirst, and now, just

as Wann enters the room, he crushes it in his hands. With the breaking glass, Pippa too, falls dead into Wann's arms. With the cry "Jumalai", Huhn sinks back and dies. Hellriegel fails to realize what has happened. He has become blind. Wann unites him with the imaginary spirit of Pippa, and sends him out of the house into the forest beyond.

As with Rautendelein, opinions are varied as to what Pippa symbolizes. Some say she is the incarnation of the flame of the glass furnace, others, that she represents life. The interpretation of #Grummann seems the most plausible however, viz: that she is the ideal of life, for which the three characters, Huhn, Hellriegel and the director are striving. The whole play is a dramatized interpretation of the thots of the director, as he views the struggle.

Huhn represents the primitive man-brute; Hellriegel, the poet-dreamer. The former tries to reach his ideal by force and in so doing, becomes unworthy of it, so that it's validity is lost for him; the latter, naturally and without effort, appropriates the ideal originally conceived by the director and Huhn. But he does not appreciate it, for the poet, having once had his vision, is blind to whether it is a reality or fantasy of the imagination, and hence Hellriegel's indifference to the possession of Pippa. Wann the mystic personality, is to represent the director's superman (Ueberschensch), his better self, with whom his lower self struggles for the abandonment of Pippa. His problem is to make Pippa a real force to all three individuals, but

Huhn has proved himself unworthy, Hellriegel will not appreciate her, and the director has seen before, the impossibility of ever really possessing and understanding her; she is indeed dead now.

Life is a continual struggle to attain to one's ideal. You yourself, can never grasp it, only the poet is able to make it concrete and give it to the world. He, however, does not appreciate it, even tho it is necessary for his very existence. The struggling masses have the same ideal before them, that the man of higher standing has, except that to the former it is still more airy and evasive, altho he realizes it less than the other.

The form of this drama is extremely naturalistic, in the fact that it is written entirely in prose, and the language used, is largely dialectic. The use of Italian and Latin, adds to the romantic element of the plot to some extent, but the expressions, the mode of dress and the actions are made very realistic. Pippa gives an airy, vague atmosphere to the entire play, from the first time she enters to the last, where she dies like the bursting of a beautiful soap-bubble. Neither her character, nor that of any other individual within the play can be thoroughly analysed. When we try it, they slip from out of our grasp. Without the symbolistic interpretation, it would be a ridiculous jumble of incoherent episodes; a senseless mingling of the natural with the supernatural.

As a drama to be presented on the stage, it lacks

dramatic power, consistency and action. It seems to have all of the faults of Hauptmann's other fairy drama, without the beauty of form to be found in "Die versunkene Glocke". We must acknowledge, however, that there is a depth of thought portrayed, which, with every successive reading, brings a broader interpretation of its symbolism.

Drei Reiherfedern.

Hermann Sudermann.

The young crown prince, Witte, was still a boy when his father died. Taking advantage of his youth, his step-brother Widwolf orders Hans Lorbass, a knight, to put him to death secretly, in order that he might have the throne. Instead of following the command, however, Hans takes the young prince to a foreign land, and there cares for him and supplies all of his wants until he has grown to manhood. Witte grows to be a weak dreamer who is filled with but one longing. He desires the possession of a woman, who shall completely supplement his nature, and thus make him a perfect man. The Begraebnissfrau, who brings peace to all who are tired of the struggles and trials of life, shows him how to find this woman. He must go to the far north, and there wage unceasing battle with the Heron, the king of the barren north, until he has plucked three feathers from its body. These he is to burn, one at a time, when he is alone. The first will bring before him, the vague outline of the longed-for woman; with the burning of the

second, she will appear, walking in her sleep, but he will not recognize her; the third will give him possession of her for the single moment before her death.

When the play opens, Witte has just returned with the heron feathers. Led by his burning desire, he casts one of the feathers into the flames. The dim outline of a woman's figure appears but almost immediately leaves again. He cannot perceive any of her features distinctly, and he is not at all satisfied with his first attempt. Nevertheless, he does not burn the other feathers, but prefers to find the woman himself, in his wanderings about the world.

On his journey he comes to a court where the widowed queen, because of dissensions in the land, has called a tournament, the winner of which, is to receive her hand and the kingdom. Widwolf, the moral degenerate, and generally hated character has entered the lists, and is almost sure to win because of his strength. The queen, afraid of Widwolf, begs Witte to fight against him for her sake, which he consents to do only after much persuasion.

He meets Widwolf in battle, but is too weak to withstand the onslaught of the mighty king. He is thrown down and saved from death, only by the timely assistance of the faithful Hans, who puts Widwolf to flight. Contrary to her promise, the queen marries Witte instead of the winner of the contest. He has no real desire to marry her, for he must continue his long search, but he does so for her sake.

The queen does not long satisfy his restless, sensuous nature, altho the image of her purity and innocence is continually before him as a sort of goal to attain to, even in the days of his worst debauchery later. The weak diseased man soon gives in to his weaker nature, however, and lives in a sinful relation with the women of the court. Thru all of this, his wife remains true to him, giving the best that she can, her love, for her fallen husband. For half of a year this life goes on, and then the old longing again takes possession of him. He feels he has nothing to stay for. He is an unlawful king; any children that he might have must, in time be subordinate to the queen's son when he reaches the age of maturity; he has nothing to hope for, except the one woman, for whom his soul still longs. In this dissatisfied mood he burns the second feather. It brings no result, however, for his wife comes in, just at that moment, walking in her sleep. In a rage, at the failure of this second attempt, he scolds her for interrupting him in his private chamber. She begs his forgiveness and entreats him, as his wife, to give her the right to his love. Their conversation brings them into closer touch with each other and something akin to love springs up within the king, for his wife.

Within a short time, the usurper, Widwolf, enters the land and besieges the city, demanding his rights, of which Witte had deprived him. The effeminate Witte will not fight.

The throne does not belong to him, nor will it ever come to any of his descendants. Thinking that this last reason is the motive of his inactivity, Hans decides to get the prince out of the way. When about to do the dreadful deed, the boy wounds himself with the king's sword, with^{which} he has been playing. Hans is touched with sympathy for the little fellow, and when he hears from the lips of the boy, the love which he bears to his step-father, he cannot gather courage to slay him. After they have left the room, the king enters, sees the bloody sword and believes that Hans has really carried out his plan. In his despair he prays to heaven for the prince's life. Then, to him, the miracle happens. Hans enters with the boy upon his arm, well and happy. His prayer answered, Witte goes out and with a giants strength overthrows his enemy, Widwolf, and saves the city from destruction.

But the common every day life of the court is too monotonous for him. In company with Hans he roams for fifteen years in search of the object of his desire, but in vain do they wander. At last, tired and worn, they come back to the land of the Begraebnissfrau, from which they started. The news, that the king has returned, spreads thru the land and reaches the ears of the queen, who immediately starts out to meet him. Thinking that his search has been in vain, Witte gives his last feather to the flames. The queen appears before him, and in a moment, falls dead in his arms. Too late he realizes that she was the woman for whom he had been looking thru all these years. Weary and fatigued, he lies

down beside her, and the Begraebnissfrau takes him into her care.

As a proof for the symbolism of the drama, and it's characters, we may mention #Heller, who says that the plot is a mere vehicle of an allegory, and that the characters are types, rather than real individuals, with one exception: Hans Lorbass. According to Lorenz, Witte symbolizes the longing of the purely human(das rein Menschliche) in man, which sees in the eternally feminine, the goal of his aspirations and his final perfection. The means of attaining this ideal is thru sensuousness in the mortal life, but is not recognized as such; it is only in the Eternal that it becomes the appreciated goal for which man has been striving thruout his whole life. Witte is to represent an advanced type of the modern man, a sort of super-man. His inner struggles with the individual of average standing, finds expression, in the play, in the physical battles which he has to fight.

There is nothing in the form of "Drei Reiherfedern" that has not been noted in the other fairy dramas, unless it be that it is more regular in it's versification, and that the naturalistic presentation is used less frequently. The verse is rhymed in several different schemes: abba, abab, aabb; all very regular. The language is dignified and impressive, and leads one into an atmosphere of somber, gloomy, restlessness, which begins with the first entrance

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of the Begraebnissfrau, and continues until she has taken the hero to his last resting place.

The tone of the supernatural within the play, is not as clear as that of the other Symbolistic Fairy dramas. It is less pure; the burning of the feathers brings, at one time, simply a vision, at another, one of the characters of the play itself. The mixture of the purely human with the supernatural, makes the plot rather confusing. As in "Koenigskinder", the atmosphere is depressing, rather than light and fairy-like, but unlike Rosmer's as well as Hauptmann's characters, these are more aggressive and independent. The action too, is quicker and more intense than in any of the previous plays, which we have considered; dramatic suspense is made use of to heighten the interest, and the events are all well motivated. Yet with all of it's devices for dramatic effect, it lacks a unified development. The hero ends just where he started, and in practically the same condition. The dramatic struggle is a weak one, and is suited to the field of philosophy rather than to the drama. We must admit, that this drama belongs less in the category of the Fairy drama than any of the others, and yet it has many of the same elements.

Comparison.

A comparison of the two types of Fairy drama which we have been considering, is difficult to make, because they overlap to such a great extent, in the elements which make them fairy plays. A rough classification, embodying their fairy elements may be given as follows:

A. The Realistic Fairy drama.

- (1) The subject-matter of old fairy-tales, treated in a legendary tone.
- (2) An element of improbability which, however, does not exclude possibility.
- (3) Conveys a feeling of unreality.
- (4) Places the reader in an atmosphere of the Imaginary.

B. The Symbolistic Fairy drama.

- (1) Actual use of the supernatural.
- (2) Vague, airy characterization.
- (3) The supernatural beings have more or less human characteristics.

This classification is one of the Fairy drama in general, for in its distinct type, each one of the plays contains all of the characteristics just named. Comparison of the individual plays may help to establish their claims as Fairy dramas. "Und Pippa tanzt" stands in a class alone, except that for its symbolism, it belongs with the second

type. In content and form "Koenigskinder" and "Die versunkene Glocke" are very similar, as are also, "Der Talisman" and "Drei Reiherfedern".

In the former two, there is an extensive use of old Germanic folk-lore, in connection with the characters and the incidents of the plot, as: the Gods of northern mythology, and the well known devices used to convey Witch's magic. Idiomatic phrases and expressions are used to make more vivid the airy and ethereal objects, bringing the less concrete conception down to a level where the human intellect can grasp it. The form of verse too, is much the same in the two dramas, being indicative, in it's irregularity, of the instability of the subject-matter.

The theme of both is very romantic, but in the treatment of the former, realistic and even naturalistic elements are very evident. This tendency is not found in the latter, however. The characters in both are weak, passive individuals, without the aggressive will power so necessary for the success of a dramatic work. But they are beautiful, even tho they fail in strength of character, and it is their beauty that gives these two plays their high value, not only in the field of the Fairy drama, but in all dramatic literature.

"Der Talisman" and "Drei Reiherfedern" resemble each other, not so much in that, as in form and character portrayal. The form of verse is more regular, but also more stilted than that used in the other two plays. Practically

no use is made of distinctly Germanic mythology, and partly for that reason the Fairy atmosphere is not as strong here as in the other plays. On the other hand, the characters are much stronger. They, themselves act, rather than receive action; they are aggressively independent. Therefore, there are greater possibilities for dramatic development in them, than in the characters who present a perfectly passive view.

Conclusion.

The question as to the place of the Fairy drama in German literature, is still unsettled. As a dramatic production, critics condemn or at least criticise it severely, calling it a failure, an absurdity, or simply a side step of the author. The great popularity of "Die versunkene Glocke" on the stage, and the increasing number of new Fairy dramas (some 9 which follow "Koenigskinder alone, mentioned by Arnold) being produced within the last fifteen years, seems to contradict the opinion of these critics. Only time will tell whether they can stand the weight of criticism. To be sure, if we judge it on the basis of the old classical standard of Lessing, we must say with Schlag # that it cannot be called a drama at all. But the standard is not the same today as it was then. In fact, the modern drama has not yet found itself, it has no universal standard. It seems possible, then, that the Fairy drama, too, may yet grow and become a force in dramatic literature.

There is a growing note of the romantic in the modern drama, especially is the fairy element becoming more prominent, not as the symbol of some subjective emotion, but as a theme for good, wholesome presentation of life. It is a subject that may well be brought into play on the stage, and has great possibilities. The Symbolistic Fairy drama, however, serves a different purpose; the instruction of

' Arnold-- Das Moderne Drama.

Schlag-- Das Drama.

man in his soul life. As such it may increase the vividness of its teaching, by taking a dramatic form, yet it cannot long supply the demand of the stage, and can hardly claim a permanent place upon it. As literature it will remain, however it may be classified.

University of Kansas.

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